Communicate with Confidence

Scientific and Technical Writing
Learn to plan, organize, and write effective, professional documents for science and engineering disciplines.

About the course

The Scientific and Technical Writing course is designed to aid international graduate students in planning, organizing, and writing effective, informative, and persuasive documents in their own disciplines. The multidisciplinary nature of the class promotes an awareness of rhetorical and language aspects in writing as opposed to matters of content. To better understand and develop professional communication skills, principles of grammar and style vital for clear and concise writing are reviewed. Focusing on attention to audience and purpose, students analyze and practice composing and revising correspondence, instructions, proposals, and formal and informal reports through participation in class and collaboration in group assignments.

Course details

**Time:** All classes are conducted online. Specific details will be communicated by the instructor.

**Intensity:** Participants should set aside 2-3 hours for reading assignments and supplemental online information, plus time to complete one writing assignment per week.

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Graduate School

English requirements

The Graduate School administers an English Placement Test to newly arrived international students not meeting certain TOEFL or IELTS requirements. Students who do not pass the test are required to take an English course during the first semester of enrollment at Virginia Tech along with a full load of academic classes (9-12 credit hours).

The Virginia Tech Language and Culture Institute offers two courses that meet the Graduate School’s English course standard: Academic and Technical Writing and Scientific and Technical Writing. Both are offered in the fall and spring semesters.

More information on these courses and the English Placement Test may be found at www.lci.vt.edu/testing/english-placement-test.

Scientific and Technical Writing at Virginia Tech

Course objectives

Successful students completing this course will be able to:
- Develop effective discussions of scientific and technical subjects designed for different audiences and a variety of formats.
- Select content and a level of detail appropriate for an intended audience.
- Choose an appropriate format for the audience and purpose of a document.
- Understand principles of style, recognize problems with prose, and revise it effectively.
- Apply principles of English grammar that are directly related to style and correctness and clarity of writing.
- Recognize common logical fallacies.
- Explain the role of definitions and descriptions in various kinds of technical communication.
- Write effective parenthetical, sentence, and extended definitions.
- Write an effective description of an object, mechanism, or process.
- Edit writing for an acceptable level of correctness and clarity.
- Use the six characteristics of an effective graphic to assess graphics in technical documents.
- Integrate graphics and text effectively.
- Offer substantial constructive feedback on drafts of documents.
- Present a critique of a document involving science or technology.
- Use visual design principles to enhance the communication of complex information.

How to register

Registration and payment are due at the beginning of each semester.

Details on registration and payment can be found online at www.lci.vt.edu/intensive-english/scientific-and-technical-writing.

Requests for refunds will be honored when received seven calendar days prior to the start of the program.

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